

Foreword



A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Today's Marine forces continue to demonstrate the readiness, agility, and lethality the Nation demands from its armed forces in uncertain times. As we battle insurgents, strike at fanatical terrorists, and deter aggression around the globe, we continue to validate the necessity of "expeditionary" capabilities in meeting the Nation's wide range of security challenges. Our success in these endeavors requires that we draw upon past strengths, while innovatively anticipating and overcoming 21st Century dangers.

The 21st Century Marine Corps must be able to project U.S. power anywhere, protect our interests and allies, and enable joint warfighting capabilities on a global scale. With our naval partners, Marines will exploit the Navy's command of the seas with sustained naval force projection ashore. Taking full advantage of this asymmetric advantage through the Sea Basing operational concept, the Navy-Marine Corps team provides a strategic capability for assuring access, increasing responsiveness, maximizing the effects of forward presence, and reducing our dependence on vulnerable land bases-which greatly expands the options available to the combatant commanders.

While we retain the ability to fight effectively across the conflict spectrum, fighting and winning the Global War on Terror remains our top priority. Because of the Nation's overwhelming strength in traditional conflicts, we believe that future conflicts will be dominated by irregular wars of an increasingly unrestricted nature, involving terrorism,

insurgency, and civil war. As a function of our heritage, training, and education, Marines intuitively think independently and act aggressively, yet with a measure of cultural understanding such chaotic and unpredictable environments demand. Typically projecting our forces from the sea, we further possess the capability to operate at long distances and for extended periods of time as an integral combined arms element of a joint force. Our forward deployed posture throughout the world, both on land and at sea, supports these goals for our increased readiness and contribution to the global war.

Our main effort in building tomorrow's Marine Corps will be honing the warfighting excellence of the individual Marine, our combined arms Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, and our expeditionary culture based on an ethos of rapid responsiveness, and our ingrained preparedness to be "First to Fight." At the center of these capabilities is the 21st century Marine, who exudes the Corps' tradition of warrior excellence and is today more capable than ever. Well trained, well led, and well equipped Marines have always been our greatest strength, and they are the focus of ensuring the Corps remains one of the world's finest fighting forces.

This 2005 version of Concepts and Programs describes our strategic direction, operational concepts, and those major programs we require to continue the Marine Corps' warfighting excellence and relevancy in the 21st century. This book also contains facts and figures on our people, organizations, and resources to foster a better understanding of the Corps and the tremendous Americans who fill its ranks.